

Five Things I'd Like to Witness Besides LeBron's Title Chase

By Jason Goudlock

In 2014 I made international headlines with a letter to the Ohio Parole Board. It was a light-hearted comment near the end that got the attention. I said I wanted to “witness in person LeBron James’ pursuit of an NBA championship for my beloved hometown team,” the Cleveland Cavaliers. When the Parole Board responded with a controversial 60-month sentence continuation—five years—I began to think of other things I’d like to witness:

1. I want to see the United States stop vilifying professional athletes such as Adrian Peterson, Tiger Woods, Ray Rice, Alex Rodriguez, Barry Bonds, Michael Vick, and Tom Brady and start paying attention to the hundreds of elected representatives throughout the U.S. who ignore the epidemic of mass incarceration, which thrives on the unjust imprisonment of poor people of color.
2. I’d like to witness all juvenile offenders who have served 20 years released from prison. The dark reality of being imprisoned as a juvenile is powerfully revealed in *15 to Life: Kenneth’s Story*, a critically acclaimed documentary. Twenty years is more than enough punishment for someone who committed a crime as an irrational juvenile, and any criminal justice reform built on this truth should be widely accepted.
3. I’d like to see influential, wealthy African-American rappers and athletes use their money and their voices to make better the lives of their impoverished African, Haitian, Asian, and Hispanic fellow human beings. Wyclef Jean and Dekimbe Mutombo are doing already what I long to witness more often.
4. I want to see people of faith stop using their religious beliefs as an excuse to hate others whose beliefs differ from theirs. A difference of belief is no reason to hate people, let alone to kill or harm them.
5. I’d like to witness all of the people who made fun of my LeBron James comment, including CBS Radio’s Jim Rome and WNBA superstar Brittney Griner, read these essays^{1 2 3} and then decide whether my experience of injustice is actually humorous.

Jason Goudlock is a progressive writer embedded in the struggle against the repressive United States prison industrial complex. He is also the author of the novel Brother of the Struggle, as well as the subject of the forthcoming film documentary Old-Law Con: The Jason Goudlock Story. If you would like to offer him support on his quest to attain his freedom and justice for Ohio old-law prisoners, you can contact him at the following:

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Learn more about Jason Goudlock and his struggle for freedom at freejasongoudlock.org.

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- 1 “Black Lives Matter: ODRC and Ohio Attorney General Michael DeWine Swindle an Inmate” - <http://freejasongoudlock.org/black-lives-matter-odrc-and-ohio-attorney-general-michael-dewine-swindle-an-inmate/>
 - 2 “Unveiling the Shadowy Past of Ohio Parole Board Member Marc Houk: A Story of Injustice” - <http://freejasongoudlock.org/unveiling-the-shadowy-past-of-ohio-parole-board-member-marc-houk-a-story-of-injustice/>
 - 3 “The Cruel and Unusual Punishment of an Ohio Old-Prisoner” - <http://freejasongoudlock.org/the-cruel-and-unusual-punishment-of-an-ohio-old-law-prisoner/>